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Jivaro Souls

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THE Jivaro proper (*auiśuri šuara*) of eastern Ecuador have long been famous for their warlike practices,[1] but the assumptions about reality upon which they predicate such behavior have not been systematically studied and analyzed.[2] A very important series of these assumptions is to be found in the Jivaro ideas concerning souls. Among these concepts has recently been discovered a deep-seated belief that killing leads to the acquisition of souls which provide a supernatural power conferring immunity from death. The purpose of the present paper is to outline some of the basic elements of these beliefs with the hope of providing a greater insight into Jivaro behavior.[3]

The emphasis here will be on presenting new data collected in 1956-57,[4] but the concluding paragraphs of the paper embody a commentary on relevant statements in the major publications dealing with this subject. At the outset it should be mentioned that I took the two most useful works on the Jivaro (Karsten 1935; Stirling 1938) into the field and went over them in detail with native informants. Accordingly, points of difference between the following material and that given by Karsten and Stirling should definitely be taken by the reader to indicate modification or refutation of the previously published statements, at least in regard to the Jivaro proper.[5]

Field research providing the present data was conducted for ten and a half months in the following river valleys occupied by the Jivaro: the Río Upano and its tributaries, the Río Tutanangoza and the Río Sepa; the Río Chigüaza; the Río Macuma; the Río Cangaimi; the Río Cusuimi; the Río Mangosiza; and in a refugee Jivaro settlement near Bucay on the western slope of the Andes. Informants who contributed particularly to the information embodied in the present paper were: *MukuimpU*, *TsukimpU*, *Utitit Aka'a*, *Kugutt*, and *Uata Aka'a* of the Río Tutanangoza; *Mata* of the upper Río Macuma; and *Hintat* of the Río Cangaimi. Chief interpreters were *Hueg'A*, *Tupi*, and *Nasia*, all from the Río Tutanangoza region.

The best information on supernatural concepts was obtained in intensive eight or nine hour daily interviews with single informants over periods of a few days to several weeks. This was an exhausting procedure for all involved: interviewer, interpreter, and informant, but was conducive to the elicitation of truthful detail. Informants' accounts were continually cross-checked and contradictions called to their attention individually. An informant, when thus confronted with a contradiction, and with his reputation for knowledge and veracity at stake, generally provided elaborative supporting detail which he might not have otherwise volunteered.

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Reluctance of informants to talk about supernatural or personal matters was in part overcome by paying them well for the time they put in. Payment was commonly in the form of black gunpowder, percussion caps, lead shot, glass and metallic beads, and cloth. In localities of Ecuadorian and missionary settlements, money was used as well. In visiting strange households, I found that a gift of an ounce or two of gunpowder invariably resulted in a friendly stay, since almost all Jívaro men today possess firearms and continually need replenishment of their supplies of ammunition. Leave-taking in the more isolated parts of the tribal territory typically involved assuring the host of my future return and "taking orders" for additional types of trade goods to be brought on the next visit. Thus, my host viewed my continued friendship to his advantage and an amiable departure always occurred, despite the fact that I was often leaving directly (with gunpowder and other goods) for a household or neighborhood with which he was feuding.

The following summary of soul beliefs is presented with two major reservations. First, as a summary, it omits consideration of the high degree of personal variability which is so characteristic of this population; what is presented here is a consensus of the views of men who were looked upon as experts in the field of religious beliefs and practices by the other members of the tribe. Second, I do not claim to have completely mastered the intricacies of Jívaro supernatural concepts; what is presented here should be viewed as a progress report on our knowledge of Jívaro soul beliefs. I fully expect additional field research to result in refinements of some of the statements presented here.

The 4,500 to 5,000 Jívaro proper live in a dense tropical rain forest environment amidst the hilly terrain at the foot of the eastern slope of the Ecuadorian Andes. The main source of food is shifting horticulture, with sweet manioc the chief crop. Hunting and fishing also have important roles in the economy. The basic economic and social unit is the nuclear family which most commonly occupies a house by itself. Such houses are scattered throughout the forest in very loose-knit neighborhood groupings, the Jívaro preferring not to live close together for explicitly-voiced anti-social reasons. Except in time of war, formal political organization is completely lacking at the neighborhood level and is never found at the tribal level. Suspicion and hostility are characteristic of the attitude toward fellow tribesmen, including many close relatives. Sorcery as well as murder by means of physical violence and poisoned food and drink are prevalent in the society.

Jívaro soul beliefs constitute one of the four major autonomous systems of verbalized thought so far noted in their culture. The other three are the systems of crop fairy (**nugui**) beliefs, of witchcraft beliefs, and the kinship system. On a conscious level, each of these systems derives from independent assumptions and can be described as a logical unit in itself, though these conceptual systems may be functionally interrelated as an expression of subconsciously existing needs. Since belief in one of these systems is not explicitly based upon belief in another, an adequate understanding of Jívaro soul beliefs

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183 182 128 can be achieved without recourse to the beliefs regarding nunuf, witchcraft, or kinship.

Three kinds of souls are recognized. The first type to be described is the 794 *arutam wakanI*. This is an acquired soul and is believed by the Jívaro to be the most important kind. A man may possess up to two arutam souls at one time. The second type of soul is the *muisak*, or avenging soul. The third to be dealt with is the *nekás* wakanI, the "true," "real," or "ordinary" soul.

THE ARUTAM SOUL[8]

[196] Arutam wakanI is perhaps best referred to as the "ancient specter" soul. The term "arutam" alone refers to a particular kind of vision or apparition. [787] "WakanI" alone simply means "soul" or "spirit." Thus, the arutam wakanI is the particular kind of soul which produces the arutam or vision. An arutam appears only occasionally and, when it does, is only in existence for less than a minute. The arutam *soul*, on the other hand, exists eternally once it has [154] been created. It is in the system of thought regarding the arutam soul that the Jívaro seek security from the ever-felt menace of death.

The Jívaro believe that the possessor of a single arutam soul cannot be [761] killed by any form of physical violence, poison, nor by sorcery, although he is [164] not immune to death from contagious diseases such as measles and smallpox.[9] In other words, a person who has even only one arutam soul in his possession [152] is relieved from daily anxiety about being murdered. A Jívaro who is for- [154] tunate enough to possess two arutam souls cannot die of *any* cause whatever, including contagious disease.

A person is not born with an arutam soul. Such a soul must be acquired, [761] and in certain traditional ways. The acquisition of this type of soul is considered to be so important to an adult male's survival that a boy's parents do [562] not expect him to live past puberty without one. Women sometimes obtain [628] arutam souls, but it is not considered so essential for them. One reason is that intra-tribal killing, the most common source of violent death, is primarily directed at adult males rather than at women and children.

[359] A boy begins seeking an arutam soul at about the age of six years. Ac- [788] companied most commonly by his father, he makes a pilgrimage to the sacred [786] waterfall of his neighborhood. This is always the highest waterfall within a [785] few days travel. It is believed to be the rendezvous of these souls which wander [806] about as breezes, scattering the spray of the long cascade. By night the pilgrims sleep near the falls in a simple lean-to. Here they fast, drink tobacco water,[7] and await the appearance of an arutam to the vision-seeker. They may keep up this fasting for as long as five days. If unsuccessful, they return home to make an attempt again at a later date.

794 If the arutam seeker is fortunate, however, he will awaken at about mid- [787] night to find the stars gone from the sky, the earth trembling, and a great wind felling the trees of the forest amid thunder and lightning. To keep from being blown down, he grasps a tree trunk and awaits the arutam. Shortly the arutam appears from the depths of the forest, often in the form of a pair of

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large creatures. The particular animal forms can vary considerably, but some of the most common arutam include a pair of giant jaguars fighting one another as they roll over and over towards the vision-seeker, or two anacondas doing the same. Often the vision may simply be a single huge disembodied human head or a ball of fire drifting through the forest towards the arutam seeker. When the apparition arrives to within 20 or 30 feet, the Jivaro must run forward and touch it, either with a small stick or his hand. This is said to require a good deal of courage, and sometimes the person flees the arutam instead. But if he does run forward and touch the vision, it instantly explodes like dynamite and disappears.[8]

Upon thus achieving success in encountering an arutam, the person returns to his house, but tells no one that he has accomplished the purpose of his quest. Arriving home, he goes alone to sleep that night on the bank of the nearest river. After nightfall, the soul of the same arutam he touched comes to him as he dreams. His dream-visitor is in the form of an old Jivaro man who says to him, "I am your ancestor. Just as I have lived a long time, so will you. Just as I have killed many times, so will you." Without another word, the old man disappears and immediately the arutam soul of this unknown ancestor enters the body of the dreamer, where it is lodged in the chest.

Upon acquiring this arutam soul, the person feels a sudden power surge into his body, accompanied by a new self-confidence. The arutam soul is supposed to increase a person's power in the most general sense. This power, called *kakarma*, is believed to increase one's intelligence as well as simple physical strength, and also to make it difficult for the soul possessor to lie or commit other dishonorable acts. His newly acquired power increases his resistance to contagious disease to some degree, but most importantly it makes it impossible for him to die as a result of any physical violence or sorcery. Most of his relatives and acquaintances shortly know that he has acquired an arutam soul simply because of the change in his personality. For example, he especially tends to speak with greater forcefulness.[9] However, he must not tell anyone that he has acquired such a soul, or it will desert him.

When one has thus obtained an arutam soul, he generally is seized with a tremendous desire to kill. If the person is past puberty, it is ordinarily only a matter of a few months before he joins or organizes a killing expedition. The rare women who possess arutam souls kill primarily by means of poisoning food or manioc beer.

Jivaro killing expeditions usually attack the victim's house just before dawn. Late in the afternoon of the day prior to the attack, the expedition halts in the forest about a quarter of a mile from its intended objective. There, in their concealed location, the participants must "declare" what kind of arutam they had each seen. The younger men form a circle around several of the most experienced killers who then ask each man in turn to describe the arutam that he had seen. As each man, young and old, does this, the soul of his arutam leaves his body forever, to roam again the forest as a wind, for arutam souls "are satisfied with one killing."[10] The departing arutam souls reportedly

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generate winds, thunder, and lightning. Eventually, at some time in the indefinite future, each soul is expected once more to enter the body of another Jivaro.

The warriors, having made their declarations, are ready to attack the following morning. Although each of them has just lost an arutam soul, the power of that soul remains in the body, only ebbing away gradually. The complete loss of this power is generally believed to take about two weeks. Since the power decreases slowly, the members of the killing party still retain enough of it the next morning so that they cannot be killed by the enemy in battle. If one of their number *is* killed in the attack, the other members of the expedition simply consider the death to be evidence that the deceased had already lost his arutam soul without realizing it. As soon as the expedition kills its intended victim, all its members again become entitled to obtain the soul of a new arutam upon their return home.

Sometimes the attackers fail in their assault on the intended victim's house. When such a failure occurs, the expedition must immediately choose a new victim and go after him at once, without returning home. If these men failed to kill someone, they would not be entitled to obtain new arutam souls, and without new arutam souls they would expect to die within weeks or, at the most, months. Since it is therefore a matter of life or death to them, the members of the killing party invariably find an enemy, or at least some stranger, to assassinate. When the killing is accomplished, they return home and each immediately seeks to encounter an arutam again and to get himself a new soul.

The acquisition of such a new arutam soul not only brings the new power or kakarma of the incoming soul but also serves to "lock in" the power of the previous one and thereby prevent it from ebbing away from the body. A person is limited to the possession of not more than two arutam *souls* simultaneously, but this "lock-in" feature of the new soul makes it possible for a person to accumulate the *power* of an indefinite number of previous souls. In other words, while the acquisition of the souls is consecutive, the acquisition of the power is cumulative.

By repeatedly killing, one can continually accumulate power through the replacement of old arutam souls with new ones. This "trade-in" mechanism is an important feature because, when a person has had the same arutam soul for four or five years, it tends to leave its sleeping possessor to wander nightly through the forest. Sooner or later, while it is thus drifting through the trees, another Jivaro will "steal" it. Accordingly, it is highly desirable to obtain a new soul before the old one begins nocturnal wanderings. This felt need encourages the individual to participate in a killing expedition every few years.

Since a man with an arutam soul cannot die as the result of physical violence, poisoning, or witchcraft, i.e., any interpersonal attack, a person who wishes to kill a specific enemy attempts to steal his arutam soul away from him as a prelude to assassinating him. This soul-stealing or capturing process

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This soul-stealing or capturing process involves drinking large quantities of an infusion of *natem.A* (*Banisteria* sp.), beating a log signal drum, and repeating the name of the intended victim. Then if the enemy's arutam soul is wandering nocturnally, it may one night hear the would-be assassin's call and, "taking pity" on his need for such a soul, enter his body, never to return to the body of its former possessor."

The Jivaro warrior desires to have personally—and thus definitely—stolen the arutam of his intended victim. This feat is often not possible, however, and the would-be murderer instead watches for signs coming to him through gossip or direct observation that the enemy already has had his arutam soul taken away by someone else. Such signs or indications, for example, would include rumors of physical weakness or illness on the part of the intended victim, or the firsthand observation that the enemy was lacking in forcefulness of speech.[12] In any case, an attack is made only if the raiders believe that the potential victim has lost his arutam soul. If they should fail to kill him, it is because the enemy still retains the soul or had a second one in reserve.

It should be noted that the personal security which the Jivaro believe comes from killing has some social reality. A man who has killed repeatedly, called *kakaram* or "powerful one," is rarely attacked because his enemies feel that the protection provided him by his constantly replaced souls would make any assassination attempt against him fruitless.

Second arutam souls can be acquired in several ways. One method is to capture the arutam soul of an enemy by beating a log signal drum as previously noted. Another common technique is to walk alone through the forest night after night, without the usual illumination of a copal torch, in the hope of encountering an arutam in the darkness.

Shamans always possess arutam souls. Those specializing in bewitching try to steal their intended victim's arutam soul before attempting to kill him through witchcraft. If the intended victim is believed to have two arutam souls, the shaman asks a shaman "friend" or partner to steal the second one for him, since no one can possess more than two such souls simultaneously. A shaman, incidentally, does not lose his arutam soul when he kills by means of sorcery.

The arutam soul must leave a man before he dies, since he cannot die while he retains one (except in the case of contagious disease, in which case retention of the power of two is necessary for certain survival). Thus, at death, he does not have any of the arutam souls left which temporarily dwelt in his body while he was alive. Then, at the moment of death, his *new* arutam souls come into existence for the first time. The exact number of these completely new, freshly "born" souls equals the quantity which the deceased person had acquired during his lifetime. Thus, if he had acquired and subsequently lost five arutam souls, then at the moment of death he forms five new arutam souls. The formation of these souls is said to generate strong winds, thunder, and lightning in the locality. The newly-created arutam souls of the dead man will live eternally, drifting as breezes and temporarily entering into the bodies of

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future generations of Jívaro. At the same moment that these arutam souls are "born," the second type of Jívaro soul comes into existence if the deceased person was murdered.

THE MUISAK[13]

The second kind of soul, the muisak or avenging soul, is closely connected with the arutam soul. Only a person who has had an arutam soul is capable of forming a muisak. Furthermore, a muisak comes into existence only when a person who has seen an arutam is killed, whether by natural or supernatural means. At the time of death of such a person his avenging soul is created and leaves his corpse through its mouth.[14] If one simply dies of contagious disease or of old age (the latter believed to be a rare occurrence), no muisak is created.

The sole reason for being of a person's muisak is to avenge his death. This soul therefore attempts to kill the murderer, or if this is not possible (due to the murderer having an arutam soul), a son or wife of the murderer. The muisak is occasionally distracted from this objective, out of jealousy, to kill instead a new spouse of his widow. Because of this latter danger, young men who have not yet acquired much arutam power tend to avoid marrying widows.

Technically, the avenging soul is only called a muisak while it is in the corpse, subsequently in the shrunken head trophy (*tsantsa*), or its immediate vicinity. When the human head trophy is not taken and prepared, the muisak is able to travel as far as it likes from the corpse and to form into one of three types of *iwanči* or demons. These three demons are forms of the natural non-human world that can kill a man. One is a particularly dangerous poisonous snake (*mašonči*). Another is the water boa constrictor or anaconda (*pəgi*) which can knock over the raft or canoe of the murderer and thereby cause him to drown in the rapid waters of one of the numerous fast-flowing rivers and streams of this hilly country. The third form is a large tree in the forest which falls on the victim and crushes him. These are the three traditional forms of death in Jívaro society which might be called "accidental" in other cultures. Since the introduction of the steel bush knife or machete and of firearms, a belief has been growing that a muisak can enter into these items to cause an "accidental" fatal wound. The Jívaro view slight self-inflicted wounds as true accidents, but grave or fatal self-inflicted wounds are always believed to be the results, respectively, of murder attempts or murders through supernatural mechanisms.

Before the avenging spirit or iwančI kills the murderer, it sometimes appears to him in the form of a man or a jaguar while he is sleeping. The sleeper tries to seize his firearm or lance (which he keeps on the bed beside him at night) to kill the apparition. Failure to do so will result in the demon eventually succeeding in killing the person. Sometimes this iwančI fails in its assassination attempt, only wounding or injuring the intended victim. In such cases, the victim becomes a permanent invalid.

When the demon has performed its act of vengeance, it then appears in

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a dream to a relative of the victim. In this dream the avenging soul has a human form. Around its neck hangs the shrunken head trophy worn by a killer in the tsantsa feasts. The demon tells the dreamer, "I have killed an enemy. Now I am going far away, where my relatives are. I am going far away to have a feast with them." The demon disappears and, since it never kills more than a single person, will never murder again.

The widely publicized practice of the Jívaro in shrinking human heads can be well understood only with a knowledge of the muisak concept. A major part of the belief and ritual associated with the shrunken head or tsantsa is a direct effort to thwart the muisak in its mission of vengeance.[18] The Jívaro believe that the completion of the process of head-shrinking forces the muisak, hovering alongside the retreating war expedition, to enter the head trophy. For this reason, as well as the practical one that the removal of the skull and its contents makes the trophy much lighter to carry on the mountainous trails, the expedition prepares its tsantsa(s) as quickly as possible while fleeing the enemy territory. One of the final steps in the processing of the shrunken head before arrival home is to rub charcoal into its skin "so that the muisak cannot see out," thereby making it difficult for the avenging soul to plan an "accidental" death in the vicinity of the tsantsa.

When the expedition arrives in its home territory, the first feast of the tsantsa is held immediately. This feast is later followed by at least one and sometimes two others. At all these feasts or dances great care is taken to prevent arguments and fights between the inebriated celebrants out of fear that the muisak might take advantage of such an interruption of the magically-binding ritual to slip from the head trophy to cause a quarrel to result in a murder. If the feasts are conducted properly, however, the muisak will be kept inside of the tsantsa until the end of the last feast. At that time, the celebrants expel it from the head trophy and send it back to its neighborhood of origin. This neighborhood is typically at a considerable distance because head trophies are normally taken only of members of other tribes. As part of this final ritual the women sing:

> Now, now, go back to your house where you lived.
> Your wife is there calling you from your house.
> You have come here to make us happy.
> Finally we have finished.
> So return.

The tsantsa is customarily later sold by the head-taker (although illegally in terms of Ecuadorian law) to a mestizo in one of the communities on the western periphery of the tribal territory. At that time, the head-taker silently repeats the exhortation to the muisak to return to its distant neighborhood as he hands it over to the trader. The head-taker goes through this act just in case there is a possibility that the ritual in the tsantsa feast did not succeed in its purpose.

During the three feasts the celebrants had been concerned with utilizing the power of the muisak as well as containing it. As in the case of the arutam

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soul, the muisak emits power, but it is believed that the muisak's power is directly transmissible to other persons. The man who took the head holds the tsantsa aloft in the ritual dance while two female relatives whom he wants to benefit, most frequently a wife and sister, hold on to him. In this manner the power of the muisak is believed to be transmitted to the women who, ordinarily, lack power-giving arutam souls. This power, transmitted from the muisak to the women through the "filtering" mechanism of the head-taker, is believed to make it possible for them to work harder and to be more successful in crop production and in the raising of domesticated animals, both of which being primarily the responsibilities of women in Jívaro society.

Tsantsa feasts are also held using the shrunken head of a tree sloth. The tree sloth is the only nonhuman creature thought to be capable of forming a muisak. Because the tree sloth moves so slowly, it is said to be very aged and therefore must once have acquired an arutam soul to have lived so long. At the same time, since the sloth moves so slowly, it is further believed to have lost its former arutam soul(s) and therefore can be killed. The feasting and ritual precautions are basically the same as in the case of a human tsantsa but generally somewhat less extensive.

THE TRUE SOUL

The "true" or "ordinary" soul, the nëkás wakanI, is born at the same moment as the person and is possessed by every living Jívaro, male or female. The true soul is present in the living individual primarily in the form of one's blood. Bleeding is therefore viewed as a process of soul-loss. This soul is passive during a person's real life and apparently is of relatively little interest to the Jívaro in terms of their total native belief systems.

When a person dies, this true soul leaves his body and, in invisible form, eventually returns to the site of the house where the deceased individual was born. There the soul lives in a spirit house identical to the one in which the deceased was born, except for the fact that the spirit house is invisible to the living. The true souls of other deceased members of the family are likewise dwelling in this house. Similarly, the true souls of former neighbors return to their original house sites as well. It is believed that the true souls conduct their household activities and visit each other just as they did when their possessors were alive. As the years pass, these souls move from house site to house site in the same order, and over the same span of time as they did when incorporated in living individuals.[18]

One significant difference should be noted between this hereafter of the true soul and the real life of its former possessor: these souls are always hungry. Although they engage in subsistence activities and eat what appears to be food to them, it never satisfies them because it is really just air. The "animals" which these souls hunt in the forest are only the souls of the birds, fish, and mammals which they killed in their former lives. Such an existence of perpetual hunger is the fate of the true souls of all persons, without regard to the kind of life they led while in living persons. Needless to say, the true soul's fate of persistent starvation is dreaded by the Jívaro.

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One can often see deer and owls lingering in the vicinity of abandoned garden and house sites.[17] The Jívaro interpret the presence of such creatures at these old living places as evidence that the animals are temporarily visible embodiments of true souls. The true souls, when they are in these visible forms, are referred to as "human demons" (*tsuar* iwančI). There is a moderate fear of them, particularly by women, and the Jívaro taboo on the eating of deer meat is based on the fear that eating such an animal might result in a deceased person's soul entering the body of the living person with the result that he may subsequently die. These "human demon" animals are often seen in pairs, a fact which the Jívaro interpret as indicating that the two creatures are temporarily visible forms of the souls of a man and his wife.

When a true soul has thus repeated the entire life history of its deceased owner, it ceases its existence as a "human demon" and changes into a "true demon." As a true demon, its form is permanently visible and more or less human, although a good deal uglier. The true demon roams the forest hungry, solitary, and lonely, feeling greatly the loss of the company of its former family. When Jívaro children wander into the forest and are not found immediately, it is said that a true demon carried off the child because it was so lonely for human companionship. Although it may take the Jívaro two or three days to find the lost child, they almost always succeed and therefore say that the true demon never harms children, but only wants to play with them.

Then the true demon, after existing for a span of years equivalent to a human lifetime, dies and changes into a certain species of giant butterfly or moth called *wampaŋ*. This creature has markings on its wings which lend it the appearance of an owl's face. All the wampaŋ are believed to be souls and are said always to be hungry, as is the case with any of the forms which the true soul takes. When a wampaŋ flies into a house, one of the persons there tosses a small piece of sweet manioc or a few drops of manioc beer in its direction. The Jívaro believe that since the wampaŋ might be the soul of a dead relative or friend it would be wrong to neglect its hunger. They do not fear the creature, however.

After a length of time about which the Jívaro are uncertain, the wampaŋ finally has its wings damaged by raindrops as it flutters through a rainstorm and dies on the ground. The true soul then changes into water vapor amidst the falling rain. All fog and clouds are believed to be the last form taken by true souls. The true soul undergoes no more transformations and persists eternally in the form of mist.

Of the three kinds of souls in which the Jívaro believe, they seem to be least interested in the "true" one, the nëkás wakanI, which does little to help the individual survive in his insecure society. It is the arutam soul instead which seems to rank first in the Jívaro mind. The arutam soul possessor believes himself to be unkillable, thereby gaining a greatly-desired sense of security in a social context of continual physical violence and interpersonal sorcery, both real and imagined. Paradoxically, the arutam soul concept also endorses assassination as a necessary form of behavior in the society.

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The arutam soul belief system contains a number of significant supernatural traits organized together into one internally logical complex. In this system the central idea of immunity from death is combined with such anthropologically well-known concepts as: a vision quest; a guardian spirit; eternal and multiple souls; a variety of generalized ancestor worship; reincarnation; soul-loss; soul-capture; non-shamanistic spirit possession; and a concept of personally-acquired impersonal power, kakarma, which resembles, but is not precisely identical to, the Oceanian mana.

The concept of the muisak furnishes the rationale for head-taking and shrinking, as well as explaining as supernatural murders those deaths which in many other cultures would be ascribed to accidental causes. In conclusion, one may observe that the Jívaro are so preoccupied with killing in real life that it seems only consistent that their two most emphasized types of souls, the muisak and the arutam soul, are supernatural devices, respectively, for murdering and avoiding being murdered. Beyond this, it is clear that these internally coherent and complex bodies of belief are an important part of the Jívaro view of reality and, as such, affect their overt behavior.

A COMMENTARY ON PREVIOUS REPORTS

A few brief comments seem to be due the reader to clarify the differences between the statements presented here and those of Karsten and Stirling, the chief contributors to the literature on the Jívaro proper. The souls will be considered here in the same order as in the preceding body of the paper, with the arutam soul first.

The "arutam" dealt with here is the "*arutama*" of Karsten (1935:448–51) and the "*tsarutama*" of Stirling (1938:115, 116). Karsten's term is a corruption of "arutam," found in a trade language used between the Jívaro and the Ecuadorian mestizos living in the village of Macas. As Karsten (1954:25) has already pointed out, Stirling's term does not exist in the Jívaro dialect.

Karsten (1954:25) has stated, "The word *ardta* or *ardtam* in the Jibaro language means 'old'; as a religious term *arutama* may be translated into 'The Old Ones.' . . ." Actually, however, while both words do have the same root, and *aruA* does indeed mean "old" or "used," the term "arutam" refers exclusively to the special vision which I have termed "ancient specter." My informants assured me that it does not mean "old ones." Also an arutam, however frightening it may appear, never kills anyone, despite a statement to the contrary by Karsten (1935:450). Although Karsten (1935:448–50) had some of the visions described to him, he was unaware of the souls responsible for them and the related system of belief.

While Stirling (1938:115) recognizes a similarity between his "*tsarutama*" (arutam) and concepts of the mana type in other cultures, he is misleading in stating that "tsarutama" is the force itself or that "it gives supernatural properties to certain classes of animals, plants or natural phenomena." When an arutam appears to a Jívaro, it is actually recognized to be a vision, distinct from natural forms of life or other natural phenomena.

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from natural forms of life or other natural phenomena. Stirling (1938:116) also errs in stating that "All of the principal nature gods . . . contain powerful *tsentsas*." In fact, it is highly questionable whether there are any supernatural figures whom the Jivaro could be said to view as gods. Stirling's candidates for gods are primarily "Pirihri, the Rain God," and "Pangi, the great anaconda River God." Any such deities are not part of the supernaturalism of the Jivaro proper. Karsten (1954:28) has already taken note of this situation, saying, "But the Jibaros have no belief in a personal Raingod Pirihri." Actually, *piripiri* is the correct term and refers to a plant which the Jivaro use magically to cause rain to swell the rivers so that their enemies cannot cross successfully. But it is not a god. The actual supernatural role of "Pangi" (*pagi*) is not significantly greater than has been indicated in the preceding descriptions of the *arutam* and *muisak* souls. Karsten (1954:31) is also correct in rejecting a claim for a Jivaro deity named "Cumbanama" (see Steward and Metraux 1948:626), a claim simply deriving from a casual statement by an early traveler in the Jivaro country. While on the subject of supposed Jivaro gods, it might as well be mentioned that Karsten's (1935:125-26) candidate for an "Earth-mother" goddess really refers to a class of female spirits (*nugui*) which can probably be best defined as crop fairies. She (or really, they) also has no husband, despite such a claim by Karsten (1935:379).

In regards to the *muisak*, Karsten (1935:480) was aware of the potentially harmful nature of the spirit of a slain enemy, but does not report some of the major beliefs surrounding it, nor is he apparently cognizant of this term for the avenging spirit while it resides in the *tsentsa*. He (1954:21) is wrong when he states that the sloth shrunken head is not called "*tsentsa*." Nor can I agree with him when he says (1954:16): " . . . I have indicated the real purpose of the *tsentsa*, and in my statements, founded on personal observations and most careful inquiries, there is nothing to add and nothing to correct."

Stirling does not mention an avenging soul or spirit. While he notes (1935:74) that the *tsentsa* possesses magical power, he incorrectly identifies such power as "*tsentsama*," when it is really power emanating from the *muisak*.

Karsten fails to distinguish the *nekás wakanl* and thus, since he uses the term *wakanl* alone, it is difficult to tell when his remarks apply to this particular soul. He is definitely wrong in his statement (1935:372) that: " . . . animals, plants and inanimate objects . . . seem to be conceived simply as disembodied human souls." What is fact is that no plants or inanimate objects are believed to *be* souls (although a few specific plants *have* souls) and only a few animals (e.g., deer, owls) are believed to be such. All other creatures with blood are thought to *have some kind of* true soul. Stirling never mentions *wakanl*.

To the reader who wonders whether some of these conflicts are due to culture change during the intervals between fieldwork by the different investigators, I submit the fact that several of my most important informants were already raising families prior to Karsten's initial Jivaro fieldwork in

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1916–1918 and did not come into significant firsthand contact with Whites until 15 to 20 years later. Stirling's fieldwork came after Karsten's, in 1930–31. The informants were also aware that what was wanted was the traditional Jivaro view, with recent innovations in belief being recorded separately.

Finally, there remains the question of whether the contradictions between the several investigators' reports stem in part from the fact that both Karsten and Stirling visited other Jivaroan tribes (i.e., Achuara, Huambisa, and Aguaruna) in addition to the Jivaro proper. In order to assess this possibility, I queried linguists who had been making prolonged investigations among the Huambisa and Aguaruna, and also personally questioned several Aguaruna, Huambisa, and Achuara men.[9] As a result, it was determined that Stirling's term "tsarutama," for example, is completely unknown in all the Jivaroan tribes, "arutam" being used by the Achuara and Huambisa and "akutan" by the Aguaruna. Likewise reported absent are any beliefs in Stirling's rain or anaconda "gods" or in Karsten's earthmother "goddess." In fact, these cursory inquiries suggest that the soul belief systems of the other Jivaroan tribes may prove to be basically similar to that sketched here for the Jivaro proper.

NOTES

[1] This tribe (dialect group) dwells, roughly speaking, between the Río Pastaza in the north and the upper Río Zamora in the south; and from the 3,500 foot contour elevation of the eastern slope of the Andes in the west to the Río Pangui in the east. The *untsuri huara* comprise the Jivaroan tribe which is usually referred to in the existing literature as the "Jivaro proper," "Jivaro," "Jibaro," "Ecuadorian Jivaro," or "Shuara." This last term, *huara*, does not mean "Jivaro," as often has been stated, but is used by the Jivaro proper to refer to any Indian or group of Indians without regard to cultural or linguistic affiliation. "*Untsuri huara*," meaning "numerous Indians," is the designation applied to this tribe by its close eastern Jivaroan neighbor, the Achuara tribe (*achuara huara*). Most of the serious anthropological information published on Jivaroan culture so far has been on the *untsuri huara* or Jivaro proper. The other Jivaroan tribes definitely known to be in existence today are the Achuara (Achual), Huambisa, and Aguaruna.

The following Jivaro orthography is partially based on that developed by Glen Turner of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. He is not responsible, however, for oversimplifications presented here. These approximate values are assigned to the following phonemes:

Vowels

- a Spanish *a*
- e English *é* in *sit*
- i Spanish *i* (nasalized when adjacent to n)
- u Spanish *u*

Consonants

- ch Spanish *ch*
- h English *h* (palatized; labialized when preceded by u)
- k English *k* (palatized when following *h* or *l* plus a nasal consonant)
- m Spanish *m*, but more palatized and labialized
- n Spanish *n* (palatized when following *h* or *l* plus a nasal consonant; voiced like Spanish *n* when *l* is adjacent)

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g English *ng* in *sing* (followed by a hard *g* sound when not the terminal phoneme)
p Spanish *p* (voiced like English *b* when following a nasal consonant, labialized when preceding *o*, palatalized when following *i* or *i* plus a nasal consonant)
r Spanish *r*
s Spanish *s*
t English *ch*
tz English *ts* in *cats*
v Spanish *v* (voiced like Spanish *d* when following a nasal consonant, palatalized when following *i* or *i* plus a nasal consonant)
w English *w* (but voiced like English *v* when adjacent to *i*)
y Spanish *y*

Unvoiced vowels (restricted to ultimate syllables) are capitalized. Stress is on the penultimate syllable unless otherwise noted. A tilde indicates nasalization.

[1] A more detailed presentation is intended for inclusion in a future monograph.

[2] The fieldwork was sponsored primarily by the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Foundation, with supplementary grants provided by the Department of Anthropology and the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley, by the American Museum of Natural History, and by the American Anthropological Association (NSF contract grant). John H. Rowe of the University of California contributed greatly to the undertaking of the fieldwork through his encouragement and advice.

[3] I wish to acknowledge my debt to these two previous fieldworkers. Their material provided inestimable leads for investigation and made my own research much more productive than it otherwise would have been.

[4] *Arutam* may also be pronounced *arutma*, since the final vowel and consonant are interchangeable, as is the case with many *Jivaro* words. See Turner (1956) for a discussion of this and some other linguistic aspects of *Jivaro*.

[5] *Jivaro* faith in the existence of *arutam* souls is so strong that all persons interviewed on the subject, even adolescents raised in mission boarding schools in the Río Upano valley, expressed a complete conviction in their reality.

[6] One of the members of the party may drink an infusion of *wuchus* (*Datura*, sp.) instead of tobacco water. Usually this is a person who has never seen *arutam* and therefore takes the drug to increase his chances of success. The other members of the group abstain from smoke in order to be able to restrain and protect the delirious person under its influence.

[7] One exception is the fretful *arutam* which only vanishes silently when resisted.

[8] Persons who have seen *arutam* can be surprisingly well singled out by this trait alone.

[9] There is also a rare super *arutam*, *awasap*, whose soul is not so easily satisfied and does not leave the body of its possessor when such declarations are made.

[10] The *arutam* soul resident in the body of a person is not his own soul in any permanent sense, but only the soul of some ancestral *Jivaro* dwelling there temporarily.

[11] Visitors to the *Jivaro* are usually impressed by the near shouting which typifies conversations between *Jivaro* of different households and neighborhoods. The functional basis for this custom can be seen in the desire of the individual to advertise his *arutam* power by being forceful in speech and gesture.

[12] Musak may be alternatively pronounced *musiki*.

[13] When a man does not cut off the head of a person he has murdered (i.e., when the victim belongs to his own tribe), he turns the corpse face down on the ground so that the victim's soul is delayed in escaping through the mouth. Then the murderer hopes to reach home before the avenging soul can catch him.

[14] A rather astonishing amount of misinformation has been published regarding the *tsantsa* surrounding the tradition. I wish to re-emphasize that any contradictions between the information presented here and previous accounts indicate rejection of that material.

[15] The *Jivaro* practice shifting cultivation and move their house locations along with their gardens.

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* Possibly due in part to the fact that the old sherdage provide fruitful grounds for these [illegible].

* Thanks are particularly due to Mildred Larson and Harold Bentley of the Summer Institute of Linguistics for providing information regarding the Ignaruma and Shapaibian beliefs, respectively. I fondly remember several Shapaibian and Ignaruma men as these points of the Institute's base in Yarinacocha, eastern Peru, in January 1941, and questioned an Ashaninca informant on the same subject in 1937 near the Gran Pajonal, eastern Ucayali.

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